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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000525

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SUBJECT: SOLIS "ACCEPTS" THAT ARIAS WILL BE NEXT PRESIDENT

REF: A. SAN JOSE 434

[1](#)B. SAN JOSE 410

Summary

[1](#)1. On March 3, Otton Solis finally conceded that he had lost the presidential election and asked the country to "accept" Oscar Arias as the next president. Solis at the same time reiterated his complaints about the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and his charges of voting "irregularities." Arias will not officially become the president-elect until the TSE makes its announcement, which is expected later this week. End summary.

Concession Without Congratulation

[1](#)2. In a carefully crafted letter read to the media on March 3, Otton Solis said Oscar Arias will be the next president and asked that the country "accept" him. In the same breath, Solis complained about Arias's "millionaire" election campaign, manipulation of the polls, and voting "irregularities." He said that some of the magistrates in the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) had behaved in a "confusing and disappointing" manner. However, Solis, putting his party in the role of the mother before King Solomon, wrote: "We will always answer, 'My lord, give this baby (read country) to the other (read Arias) alive and don't kill it.'"

[1](#)3. Unlike the other major presidential candidates, Solis will not go to Arias's home to congratulate him personally. Instead, he sent a letter, parts of which were made public on March 4. In the letter Solis asked Arias to renounce 3 billion colones (USD 6 million) of the reimbursement that the state owes Arias's National Liberation Party (PLN) as part of state support for election campaigns. Solis said that his Citizens' Action Party (PAC) was not taking full reimbursement. Solis said Arias should follow PAC's lead as a "sign of sincerity" to combat poverty because such money could be used for "desks, classrooms, and scholarships for the poorest children of the country."

Solis's Legislative Program

[1](#)4. Solis said he would support Arias's proposal to increase public education spending from 6 percent to 8 percent of GDP. Solis also asked that a fund be created to subsidize agriculture and that, as an austerity measure, the number of legislative staffers be cut. He proposed that CAFTA-DR be renegotiated before ratification.

Arias Responds

[1](#)5. Arias told the press that "the time has come to turn the page" on the presidential election. He added: "If I had been in Solis's shoes, I would have called on February 5 (election day) to offer congratulations. But each of us has his own way of doing things, and I'm glad that (Solis) recognized that I will be president of Costa Rica." Arias said that his first acts as president will be in those areas where there is already broad agreement such as strengthening public education and improving infrastructure, especially roads. He said: "The doors to my house are always open, and (Solis) does not need an appointment to talk with me." (Note: Arias's brother and future chief of staff, Rodrigo Arias, told the press on February 24 that after Costa Rica ratifies CAFTA-DR, he (Rodrigo) would be willing to accompany PAC leaders to Washington to hear for themselves whether or not the treaty could be modified or renegotiated.)

[1](#)6. The TSE plans to officially announce Oscar Arias as the winner of the presidential election during the week of March [1](#)6. First the TSE must resolve the remaining 37 or so of the 696 citizen complaints (most originating from PAC) concerning the presidential election. This should be completed by March [1](#)8.

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